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Law Firm Diversity Demographics Show Little Change, Despite Economic Downturn Representation in Some Markets Declines While Others Show Small Gains

In 2009, the percentage of women and minority lawyers in law firms across the nation was only slightly higher than in 2008, with rates of change in some cases less than in previous years. Representation in some cities showed small gains, while in other markets the percentage of women and minority lawyers actually declined. Throughout most jurisdictions, minority women continue to be the most dramatically underrepresented group at the partnership level.

Minority women make up less than 2% of the partners in the nation's major law firms. At just 1.88% of partners in 2009, this group is particularly underrepresented in the partnership ranks, even more so than minority men, who account for just 4.17% of partners this year. These are the most significant findings of NALP's recent analyses of the *2009-2010 NALP Directory of Legal Employers* (NDLE), the annual compendium of legal employer data published by NALP. The representation of minority women partners is only slightly higher, 2.33%, at the largest firms of more than 700 lawyers. The newest NDLE also reveals that representation of minority women among partners varies considerably by geographic location, with firms in Miami reporting the highest level of representation, at 6.30%. This contrasts with nine cities where minority women make up less than 1% of partners.

During the 17 years that NALP has been compiling this information, law firms have made steady, albeit slow, progress in increasing the presence of women and minorities among their lawyers and summer associates. In 2009, minorities account for 6.05% of partners in the nation's major firms, and women account for 19.21% of the partners in these firms. In 2008, the figures were 5.92% and 18.74%, respectively. The total change since 1993, the first year for which NALP has comparable aggregate information, has been only marginal. At that time minorities accounted for 2.55% of partners and women accounted for 12.27% of partners. Looking at all lawyers represented, minorities now make up just over 12% of lawyers at these law firms, just under one-third of lawyers at these same firms are women, and minority women account for just over 6% of lawyers at these firms.

According to NALP Executive Director James Leipold, "It is clear that the overlap of race and gender is significant, and presents unique hurdles for minority women in the law firm setting. Despite the fact that minority women outnumber minority men in law schools, minority women continue to leave law firms at a faster pace than their male and non-minority peers, often to pursue legal careers that are not law firm based."

The most recent findings from the *NALP Directory of Legal Employers* also reveal that, nationally, women and minorities continue to be much better represented in associate and summer associate ranks than in the partnership ranks. In 2009, women account for 45.66% of associates, minorities for 19.67% of associates, and minority women for 11.02% of associates. Each group lags in their representation compared to the population of

recent law school graduates. According to the American Bar Association, since the late 1980s, the percentage of minority law school graduates has more than doubled, from 10% to between 22% and 23%. During the same period, the presence of women among law school graduates has grown from 40% to about 48%. Summer associate classes best reflect law school enrollment, with women comprising 46.62% of summer associates, minorities 24.04%, and minority women 12.90% of summer associates in 2009. Despite little change in the percentage of minority summer associates since 2007, in 2009 minority representation in summer programs slightly exceeded their representation among law students for the fifth year in a row, even though the aggregate number of summer associates was down by about 20%, reflecting smaller summer classes.

Analyses for the 45 cities with the most attorneys represented in the directory reveal considerable variations in these demographic measures. Representation of women among partners ranges from a low of 10.76% in Salt Lake City to a high of 24.36% in San Francisco. Percentages for minority partners range from a low of 1.68% in Cincinnati to a high of 23.46% in Miami. These same two cities also anchor the range of minority women partners — from a low of 0.48% to a high of 6.30%. Likewise percentages for women associates ranged from 36.8% in Orange County, CA, to 53.37% in San Francisco. For minority associates the range was from 5.94% in Salt Lake City to almost 39% in Miami. The range for minority women associates was from 2.81% in Birmingham to almost 20% in Miami.

Among the largest of these cities (those with more than 1,000 partners represented), Los Angeles and San Francisco show the highest representation of women, minorities, and minority women among both partners and associates. Minorities account for 12.13% and 10.26% of partners in these two cities, respectively, and women account for 19.70% and 24.36% of partners, respectively. More than 3% of partners are minority women in both cities. Firms in Atlanta, New York, Seattle, and Washington, DC, also are close to or exceed national averages on most measures.

Among smaller cities, Miami, the Fort Lauderdale area, and San Jose exceeded national averages. In Miami, women account for 21.73% of partners; minorities, many of whom are Hispanic, account for 23.46% of partners, and 6.30% of partners are minority women. Comparable figures in the San Jose area are 19.05%, 15.89%, and 4.00%. In the Fort Lauderdale area the percentages are 22.54%, 7.38%, and 2.87%, respectively.

In many other cities, the picture is considerably different: Firms in about 30% of the cities are below average on most or all measures and considerably so with respect to minorities. Cities in this category include Birmingham, Charlotte, Grand Rapids, Kansas City, Nashville, Salt Lake City, and Wilmington. Numerous others, such as Boston, Cleveland, Minneapolis, and Pittsburgh, are about average with respect to women, but lag on minority representation. In a few cities, such as Hartford and Richmond, only the percentage of women associates is at or above average. These findings reflect in part considerable contrasts in the population as a whole in these areas. For example, according to recent population estimates from the US Census Bureau, the population of Salt Lake County is only about 19% minority. In the Grand Rapids and Pittsburgh areas, the figures are about the same. In contrast, the population of Los Angeles is 68% minority. But minority representation within law firms does not always parallel minority representation within the overall population of an area. For example, in the Charlotte area, almost half the population is minority, and in Richmond about 60% is minority, but this diversity is not reflected among lawyers working in law firms in those cities.

Among summer associates, minorities have the highest representation in Hartford, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Miami, Orlando, San Francisco, San Jose, and Seattle, where one-third or more are minority. Representation

of minority women among summer associates is highest in Hartford, San Francisco, and Seattle. (See Tables 1 and 2 for the data from 45 individual cities and metropolitan areas, and from nine other states or geographic areas.)

Despite incremental increases in the representation of women and minorities in the aggregate from 2008 to 2009, this has not been the case everywhere. Although exact comparisons with prior years are not possible because of variations in offices listing in the directory each year, a core consistency in office listings allows for some approximate comparisons. In the five largest markets represented in the directory — Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, DC — representation of women and minorities among partners and associates generally at least held steady, if not registered small gains. In other cities where the core of reporting offices was relatively stable, however, decreases in the aggregate are noted. In Houston and New Orleans, for example, representation of women and minorities decreased among associates, and to a lesser extent among partners. Losses at the associate level are noted in Cincinnati, Detroit, Milwaukee, Northern New Jersey, and Orange County, CA. Increased representation among associates occurred as well, for example, in Austin, Portland, OR, and Wilmington, DE.

“It is likely that layoffs and reduced hiring during the past year have contributed to the small declines we have been able to measure,” according to Leipold, NALP’s Executive Director. “These data were gathered early in 2009, and therefore do not reflect all of the layoffs that have occurred, and in fact continue to occur, as a result of the economic slowdown. I think law firms are working very hard to maintain a diverse workforce, even as they experience overall reductions in headcount, but I am fearful that we may see further erosion of some of these numbers when we look at the data for 2010. The good news is that the 2009 data do not reflect more widespread decreases, and in fact in most markets, diversity levels rose in spite of the tough economic times.”

The *2009-2010 NDLE* includes attorney demographic information for almost 139,000 partners, associates, and other lawyers in over 1,500 offices, and for over 9,000 summer associates in over 1,000 offices nationwide. Table 1 presents the most recent findings on the representation of women and minorities among partners and associates at law firms. It provides nationwide figures, figures broken down by law firm size, and figures for 45 cities and nine additional states or portions of states. Table 2 presents analogous information for summer associates and for all lawyers. For purposes of these analyses, minority attorneys include those whose race or ethnicity is Black, Hispanic, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and those of multi-racial heritage, as reported by the law firms in the NDLE. The partner numbers include all partners because the NDLE does not ask law firms to report equity and non-equity partners separately.

The *2009-2010 NALP Directory of Legal Employers*, which provides the individual firm listings on which these aggregate analyses are based, is available online at www.nalpdirectory.com.

About NALP: Founded in 1971, the National Association for Law Placement, Inc.[®] (NALP) is dedicated to facilitating legal career counseling and planning, recruitment and retention, and the professional development of law students and lawyers. NALP maintains an online archive of press releases at www.nalp.org/pressreleases. For additional information about NALP research, contact Judith Collins (jcollins@nalp.org), Director of Research, or James G. Leipold (jleipold@nalp.org), Executive Director, 202-835-1001. Mailing address: National Association for Law Placement, 1025 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 1110, Washington, DC 20036-5413.

Table 1. Women and Minorities at Law Firms — Partners and Associates — 2009

	PARTNERS				ASSOCIATES				# of Offices
	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	
Total	61,821	19.21%	6.05%	1.88%	63,168	45.66%	19.67%	11.02%	1,514
By # of Lawyers Firmwide:									
50 or fewer lawyers.....	2,116	20.79	5.25	2.13	1,468	40.60	14.31	7.90	125
51-100 lawyers.....	5,234	18.86	5.81	2.03	3,317	44.02	15.19	8.77	151
101-250 lawyers	14,756	19.19	4.52	1.36	10,105	44.81	15.83	8.61	254
251-500 lawyers	12,502	19.09	5.34	1.58	10,655	45.81	17.02	9.44	290
501-700 lawyers	6,821	19.62	6.35	2.07	7,295	45.65	18.78	10.72	192
701+ lawyers	20,392	19.10	7.63	2.33	30,328	46.31	22.85	12.86	502
Offices in:									
Atlanta	1,694	18.42	7.20	2.36	1,701	49.56	17.87	12.11	39
Austin.....	482	24.07	9.34	3.73	410	43.41	17.32	8.54	22
Baltimore.....	605	21.16	4.30	1.16	346	41.91	12.43	6.36	12
Birmingham.....	656	17.07	2.90	1.52	320	40.63	6.88	2.81	11
Boston area.....	1,907	20.71	3.46	1.31	2,278	47.37	14.22	7.95	37
Charlotte.....	619	16.16	4.85	1.78	627	39.71	12.12	7.02	22
Chicago.....	4,380	20.11	5.84	1.92	4,006	44.61	17.32	9.61	65
Cincinnati.....	416	18.75	1.68	0.48	252	42.46	10.71	6.35	12
Cleveland.....	703	19.91	3.98	1.42	542	46.68	8.30	4.98	15
Columbus.....	586	16.89	3.92	0.51	386	44.04	12.18	7.51	13
Dallas.....	1,408	17.76	5.89	1.56	1,500	40.80	16.00	8.67	36
Denver.....	683	22.55	5.42	1.76	599	47.41	12.85	6.51	28
Detroit area.....	921	20.09	4.56	1.63	451	43.46	11.09	6.21	14
Ft. Lauderdale/W. Palm Beach.....	244	22.54	7.38	2.87	172	45.93	21.51	13.95	11
Grand Rapids.....	449	15.14	2.00	0.67	163	44.79	12.27	8.59	10
Hartford.....	308	17.86	2.60	1.30	224	45.98	13.84	8.04	11
Houston.....	1,365	17.00	7.25	1.83	1,409	42.73	20.30	10.43	42
Indianapolis.....	761	20.24	3.02	1.18	436	44.50	11.01	5.73	12
Kansas City area.....	832	17.67	2.28	0.48	525	43.05	10.67	5.33	11
Las Vegas.....	211	19.91	5.69	1.90	239	39.75	13.39	6.28	15
Los Angeles area.....	2,655	19.70	12.13	3.69	3,295	49.10	29.59	16.81	92
Miami.....	635	21.73	23.46	6.30	516	46.51	38.95	19.96	19
Milwaukee.....	679	21.50	3.53	1.18	428	46.26	13.08	7.48	7
Minneapolis.....	1,337	20.94	2.17	0.60	864	45.83	13.89	7.06	21
Nashville.....	390	16.92	2.82	1.03	274	43.43	12.77	8.76	9
New Orleans.....	379	23.22	4.22	0.79	234	47.86	10.26	5.56	8
New York City.....	7,524	16.85	6.38	2.02	14,753	44.99	23.95	13.43	131
Northern NJ/Newark area.....	1,269	17.10	3.78	1.42	1,288	46.35	13.82	8.62	25
Northern Virginia.....	326	14.72	6.44	2.45	308	44.48	18.51	9.42	18
Orange Co., CA.....	649	15.56	9.40	2.62	769	36.80	24.58	11.05	31
Philadelphia.....	1,023	18.96	3.91	1.17	1,185	47.85	13.25	8.10	17
Phoenix.....	798	18.30	4.76	1.25	602	39.87	15.61	7.14	20
Pittsburgh.....	552	17.93	1.99	0.36	423	47.52	10.64	8.04	11
Portland, OR area.....	585	19.83	3.25	1.37	345	49.28	12.75	8.70	19
Raleigh/Durham.....	401	21.45	2.74	0.75	287	44.95	8.01	4.88	20
Richmond.....	392	14.54	3.06	1.02	326	46.01	11.04	6.13	8
Salt Lake City.....	251	10.76	1.20	0.40	202	23.76	5.94	2.97	12
San Diego.....	419	18.14	8.59	1.43	557	43.63	19.03	10.05	19
San Francisco.....	1,716	24.36	10.26	3.85	2,089	53.37	28.43	17.66	61
San Jose area.....	950	19.05	15.89	4.00	1,626	45.57	36.96	18.14	51
Seattle area.....	1,055	22.46	8.34	2.94	703	47.80	20.48	11.24	36
St. Louis.....	767	19.95	3.26	1.17	570	44.74	13.33	7.02	9
Tampa/St. Petersburg.....	422	18.48	7.11	1.90	276	48.55	15.22	8.70	13
Washington, DC.....	6,068	20.19	6.79	2.29	7,032	46.33	20.83	12.00	133
Wilmington.....	310	16.77	3.23	1.29	369	41.46	11.11	5.69	11

(continued)

(Table 1, continued)

	PARTNERS				ASSOCIATES				# of Offices
	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	
States:									
Other areas in California	375	21.60	9.33	2.93	387	48.84	21.71	9.56	19
Other areas in Connecticut	310	25.16	1.29	0.65	241	56.85	15.35	9.96	11
Other areas in Florida	374	19.52	6.15	2.41	263	47.15	14.07	7.22	19
Kentucky	546	21.25	2.01	0.37	289	45.67	12.11	4.84	7
Other areas in New Jersey	203	16.75	2.96	0.99	167	41.32	11.98	4.19	6
Other areas in New York State	824	16.87	2.91	0.73	508	47.83	9.25	5.71	17
Other areas in Ohio	372	18.55	2.69	1.08	229	39.30	7.42	4.37	10
Other areas in Pennsylvania	306	17.32	2.94	0.65	153	38.56	3.27	1.96	8
Other areas in Texas	280	16.79	5.71	0.71	207	39.61	16.91	8.21	14

Source: The 2009-2010 NALP Directory of Legal Employers. Some city information includes one or more offices in adjacent suburbs. Orange County includes offices in Costa Mesa, Irvine, and Newport Beach. The San Jose area includes offices in Cupertino, Menlo Park, Mountain View, Palo Alto and E. Palo Alto, Redwood Shores/Redwood City, San Jose, and Sunnyvale. The Northern New Jersey/Newark area includes offices in Newark, Short Hills, Roseland, West Orange, Florham Park, Hackensack, Morristown, Parsippany, Westfield, Bridgewater, and Woodbridge. Northern Virginia includes offices in Falls Church, McLean/Tysons Corner, Reston, Vienna, and Alexandria. State figures exclude cities reported separately. For multi-office firms that reported only firmwide figures, the information was attributed to the reporting city if at least 60% of the firms lawyers are in that city.

Table 2. Women and Minorities at Law Firms — Total Lawyers and Summer Associates — 2009

	TOTAL LAWYERS					SUMMER ASSOCIATES			
	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	# of Offices	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women
Total	138,914	32.97%	12.59%	6.33%	1,514	9,422	46.62%	24.04%	12.90%
By # of Lawyers Firmwide:									
50 or fewer lawyers	3,883	29.05	8.50	4.25	125	234	37.18	16.67	9.40
51-100 lawyers	9,432	28.31	9.06	4.44	151	475	43.58	21.05	12.63
101-250 lawyers	27,689	29.80	8.81	4.12	254	1,462	47.13	22.30	11.63
251-500 lawyers	26,072	32.05	10.61	5.18	290	1,472	46.74	21.88	12.36
501-700 lawyers	16,114	34.05	12.48	6.44	192	1,124	45.28	24.20	11.30
701+ lawyers	55,724	35.72	16.30	8.41	502	4,655	47.54	25.91	14.05
Offices in:									
Atlanta	3,782	34.93	12.56	7.22	39	210	45.71	24.29	13.33
Austin	983	34.28	12.51	6.00	22	79	46.84	29.11	18.99
Baltimore	1,119	30.56	7.33	3.13	12	44	47.73	22.73	13.64
Birmingham	1,045	25.93	4.02	1.91	11	138	41.30	3.62	2.90
Boston area	4,598	35.80	9.05	4.72	37	377	52.25	18.04	9.55
Charlotte	1,373	29.13	8.59	4.44	22	68	38.24	10.29	2.94
Chicago	8,982	32.02	11.03	5.47	65	522	44.83	23.56	10.92
Cincinnati	775	28.90	4.77	2.45	12	38	26.32	18.42	5.26
Cleveland	1,424	32.79	5.62	2.74	15	87	43.68	19.54	9.20
Columbus	1,123	29.12	6.86	3.12	13	52	65.38	23.08	13.46
Dallas	3,229	29.70	10.90	5.17	36	268	46.27	22.01	10.45

(continued)

(Table 2, continued)

	TOTAL LAWYERS					SUMMER ASSOCIATES			
	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women	# of Offices	Total #	% Women	% Minority	% Minority Women
Denver.....	1,444	34.70	8.45	3.88	28	70	51.43	25.71	12.86
Detroit area	1,502	27.70	6.72	3.13	14	48	35.42	22.92	14.58
Ft. Lauderdale/W. Palm Beach.....	452	32.96	13.05	7.52	11	15	40.00	26.67	20.00
Grand Rapids	724	21.55	4.56	2.62	10	50	42.00	24.00	12.00
Hartford	602	30.73	6.48	3.65	11	25	48.00	36.00	24.00
Houston	3,086	31.27	13.38	5.99	42	348	41.09	29.31	12.36
Indianapolis.....	1,361	31.23	5.80	2.79	12	38	50.00	23.68	13.16
Kansas City area.....	1,647	30.12	5.34	2.37	11	82	45.12	28.05	14.63
Las Vegas.....	486	29.84	9.26	4.12	15	12	25.00	8.33	8.33
Los Angeles area	6,508	36.08	21.07	10.63	92	471	48.83	32.48	16.99
Miami.....	1,220	32.87	30.49	12.30	19	44	47.73	34.09	20.45
Milwaukee	1,174	31.35	7.16	3.58	7	64	40.63	17.19	6.25
Minneapolis.....	2,450	30.90	6.53	3.14	21	150	50.00	23.33	12.00
Nashville	712	29.63	6.88	4.21	9	24	45.83	20.83	16.67
New Orleans.....	725	33.66	6.62	2.76	8	84	48.81	14.29	9.52
New York City	24,496	35.57	17.54	9.30	131	2,386	46.69	26.28	14.79
Nothorn NJ/Newark area.....	2,896	31.28	8.32	4.66	25	120	49.17	27.50	15.00
Northern Virginia.....	695	30.65	12.23	5.76	18	24	33.33	16.67	8.33
Orange Co., CA	1,509	27.97	17.89	7.82	31	126	36.51	19.05	5.56
Philadelphia	2,507	34.50	8.50	4.63	17	125	50.40	22.40	12.00
Phoenix.....	1,507	28.73	9.69	3.98	20	74	43.24	17.57	8.11
Pittsburgh	1,093	31.02	5.22	3.39	11	42	47.62	11.90	2.38
Portland, OR area	1,011	31.06	6.43	3.86	19	47	44.68	27.66	8.51
Raleigh/Durham	799	33.29	5.38	2.75	20	48	60.42	18.75	14.58
Richmond.....	781	30.60	6.27	3.20	8	43	46.51	18.60	11.63
Salt Lake City.....	494	16.40	3.44	1.42	12	24	37.50	4.17	0.00
San Diego.....	1,037	32.88	14.56	6.46	19	53	47.17	30.19	15.09
San Francisco.....	4,208	40.42	19.39	10.84	61	272	53.68	35.29	21.69
San Jose area	2,760	36.01	28.70	12.61	51	264	40.91	38.64	20.08
Seattle area.....	1,933	32.95	12.62	6.16	36	79	54.43	32.91	21.52
St. Louis	1,471	31.00	7.07	3.54	9	57	54.39	19.30	10.53
Tampa/St. Petersburg.....	742	30.19	10.65	4.58	13	34	44.12	14.71	0.00
Washington, DC.....	15,014	34.53	14.25	7.41	133	1,109	48.51	22.27	12.80
Wilmington	735	29.52	7.48	3.54	11	58	29.31	13.79	6.90
States:									
Other areas in California	865	35.14	15.61	6.47	19	25	48.00	36.00	24.00
Other areas in Connecticut.....	594	39.73	7.24	4.71	11	23	43.48	21.74	13.04
Other areas in Florida	702	31.62	8.97	4.13	19	29	37.93	20.69	13.79
Kentucky	976	30.12	5.43	1.95	7	32	53.13	9.38	3.13
Other areas in New Jersey.....	408	27.94	6.62	2.45	6	14	64.29	28.57	21.43
Other areas in New York State.....	1,558	27.73	4.88	2.25	17	51	50.98	25.49	15.69
Other areas in Ohio	656	26.37	4.27	2.13	10	15	46.67	26.67	20.00
Other areas in Pennsylvania.....	542	24.54	3.32	1.29	8	15	53.33	6.67	6.67
Other areas in Texas.....	568	28.70	10.04	4.05	14	40	45.00	20.00	7.50

Source: The 2009-2010 NALP Directory of Legal Employers. Some city information includes one or more offices in adjacent suburbs. Orange County includes offices in Costa Mesa, Irvine, and Newport Beach. The San Jose area includes offices in Cupertino, Menlo Park, Mountain View, Palo Alto and E. Palo Alto, Redwood Shores/Redwood City, San Jose, and Sunnyvale. The Northern New Jersey/Newark area includes offices in Newark, Short Hills, Roseland, West Orange, Florham Park, Hackensack, Morristown, Parsippany, Westfield, Bridgewater, and Woodbridge. Northern Virginia includes offices in Falls Church, McLean/Tysons Corner, Reston, Vienna, and Alexandria. State figures exclude cities reported separately. For multi-office firms that reported only firmwide figures, the information was attributed to the reporting city if at least 60% of the firms lawyers are in that city.

Note: The number of offices reporting one or more summer associates, including demographic information, was 1,056.